

# SIT & DOWN

## Phase 1 — Luring With Sit & Down

For good manners, you want to teach your dog that sitting effectively means “please?” Teach them to sit to open doors, sit for treats, sit to greet you, and sit for toys and play. Here’s how we start at the beginning.

### Sit

- **Say it:** “Sit!”
- **Show it:** Hold a treat (the lure) between your fingers right in front of your dog’s nose, and slowly move it up and back over their head, drawing their nose straight up. With their nose up, their rear should plop down.
- **Reward it:** Praise when your dog’s rear hits the floor, and treat them while they’re sitting.
- **Repeat it:** If your dog doesn’t stand after eating their treat, just move a step away from them to get them standing, and start again.
- **Tips**
  - If your dog jumps to get the treat, it’s too high. Plant it right on their nose and try again.
  - If your dog backs up as the lure goes over their head, practice with their rear against a wall.

### Down

Down is a useful skill for well-mannered dogs.

- **Say it:** With your dog in a sit, say “down!”
- **Show it:** Lure them “nose to toes,” moving the lure from their nose straight down to the floor between his front legs, then out from your dog a couple of inches along the floor (as if you’re drawing an L-shape in the air).
- **Reward it:** When their elbows hit the ground, praise your dog and give them a treat while they’re down.
- **Repeat it:** If your dog doesn’t stand after eating their treat, move a step away to get them standing. Then ask them to sit, and start again.
- **Tips**
  - If your dog won’t go down, stand or squat at an angle to them, not directly in front of them.



- If your dog's rear pops up, just withdraw the lure, ask for a sit, and try again.
- If they only go down part of the way, shape your dog's behavior by rewarding them for a partial down a few times, then gradually entice them further down until their elbows touch the ground.
- Try a softer or warmer surface, or try practicing with the dog on a chair or couch and drawing the lure down slightly below the edge of the seat.

## **Phase 2 – Hand Signals With Sit & Down**

Now that your dog moves easily into sit and down positions with a lure, change your lures to hand signals. That means you'll use the same hand motions that you did while luring, but now without a treat in your fingers. (Your hand will be empty.) If your dog doesn't seem to understand the hand signal, don't revert to luring. Just wait a few moments for them to figure it out or end your practice and try again later.

### **Tips**

- The key rule of training a dog — and this is something you'll use when trying to teach your dog anything — is to say their name only once and give them a command only once. Instead of repeating yourself (and nagging the dog), what you want to do to follow through is show your dog the correct behavior. Translate your words into action your dog can understand: if you want them to lie down, move your hand to the floor; if you want them to come to you, run away.